

INDIAN MONKS IN VIETNAM
AND VIETNAMESE MONKS IN INDIA

I

Vietnam is a long and narrow country with its shape like the letter « S ». It is bounded on the west by Cambodia and Laos, and on the north, east and south by the Chinese colossus, Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Thailand, Burma and the easternmost reaches of India. It has a coastline wandering along a distance of nearly 2,500 kilometres from the Mong-Cay (Gulf of North Vietnam) to the Cambodian border (Gulf of Thailand). It formerly comprised the regions known to early history as Funan and Campā, which lay on the Indochinese Peninsula between India and China, the two great thickly populated and highly civilised countries in Asia which have strongly influenced its politics and culture. The Vietnamese people often contrast the form of their country with that of the « two baskets of rice attached to the two ends of bamboo-pole used by the Vietnamese peasant to carry his load »¹. This comparison is quite apt because the geographical character of Vietnam is dominated by the two fertile rice producing deltas — The Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong Delta in the South — which are joined by the Truong Son range².

The Vietnamese is generally a religious people and « religion dominates him since his birth, guides him to the tomb, and even after his death, keeps him under its influence »³. In Vietnam we have a variety of religions, and almost all the principal religions of the world are

1. JOSEPH BUTTINGOR, *The Smaller Dragon, A Political History of Vietnam*, London, 1958, p. 40.

2. The Vietnam Council of Foreign Relations, *An Introduction to Vietnam*, 4th edn. Saigon, 1970, p. 1.

3. LEOPOLD CADIÈRE, *Croyances et Pratiques Religieuses des Vietnamiens*, Tome III, Paris, 1957, p. 69.

found here such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity etc. Besides these, the cults of ancestors originating from the filial piety and that of the gods or deities are also followed by him⁴.

II

It appears, Buddhism was introduced into what was in those times known as Giao-Chi (new North Vietnam) by the monks who came from India and China by land and sea-routes. We are told that towards the end of the second century A.D., during the reign-period of Si-Nhiep or Shiti Hsieh (187-226 A.D.), Giao-Chi was an important Buddhist cultural centre which had grown up parallelly with the affluence of the Indian merchants trading in that area. The influence of Buddhism on the development of Indian navigation in ancient time can well be judged from the fact that the mighty junks of maritime tradesmen always travelled under the protection of the Dīpaṅkara Buddha or « Calmer of the Water »⁵ and often brought along with them in their long voyages the monks who served at the same time as priests, physicians as well as sorciers. Moreover, Giao-Chi (modern North Vietnam) served as an important meeting place for the Indian, Chinese and other foreign travellers and missions during third-seventh centuries A.D.⁶ It also served as the rest station for these merchants and Buddhist missionaries of the time, who travelled by sea between India and China, and China and India. Thus, from second century A.D. onward Giao-Chi (Giao-Chau or North Vietnam) came to be a very important centre of contact for the pilgrims and foreign monks coming from India, China and Indo-Scythian empire who studied and propagated Buddhism there. It was in the wake of these hectic missionary activities that several monasteries came to be constructed for the first time during the reign-period of Si-Nhiep to meet their religious requirements. Of these the earliest monasteries were those of Phap Van (or Dau) situated at Khuong Tu village in the Luy Lâu citadel (present-day Hã Bắc province in North Vietnam), of Phuc Nguven at Mãn Xã village (modern Hã Bắc province) and Phap Vu (vulgarly called monastery of Dau) in the present-day Thuong Tin prefecture, province of Ha Dong (North Vietnam)⁷.

4. For details see *ibid.*, Tome II, Saigon, 1955 & Tome III, Paris, 1957. Also see *Vietnamese Realities*, publ. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saigon, 1969, Chap. XII, pp. 157-78.

5. SYLVAIN LEVI, in « Bulletin de l'Association Française de Amie de l'Orient », Oct. 1929, pp. 19-39.

6. PAUL PELLIOU, *Le Fou Nan*, in BEFEO, Tome III, Hanoi, 1903, pp. 248-303. Also see SYLVAIN LEVI, *Deux Peuples Meconnus*, in « Melanges Charles de Harlez », Paris, 1896, pp. 176-86.

7. CL. MADROLLE, *Le Tonkin Ancien; Les Pagodes Voisines de lei Leou (Luy Lau)*, in BEFEO, Tome XXXVII, Hanoi, 1937, Fascicule 2, pp. 292-93.

We learn on the authority of a Vietnamese source (written in Chinese in the 14th century A.D.)⁸ that towards the end of the reign-period of the Chinese Emperor Linh De or Ling-Ti (168-188 A.D.) of the Eastern Han (25-220 A.D.) two Indian Buddhist monks named Ma Ha Ky Vuc (Skt. Mahājīvaka) and Khâu Dā La (Skt. Kṣudra or Kaudra) — a Brāhmaṇa, arrived at the same time in Luy Lau, the capital of Giao-Chi, which was then ruled by the Chinese Commandery-Chief of Si-Nhiệp⁹. It was here that the two monks met a lay disciple (Skt. *Upāsaka*) from Khmer kingdom, named Tu Dinh who requested them to live in this country. But Venerable Mahājīvaka turned down his request whereas Venerable Kṣudra accepted it and came to stay at his residence where he is said to have practised asceticism and observed fasting for days together to purify his body and soul¹⁰.

From the Chinese source, however, we learn that Mahājīvaka went to Giao-Chau towards the year 924 A.D. and returned to India in about 306 A.D.¹¹. Yet another Chinese author, Hui Hao (died 554 A.D.) informs us that this Indian monk came from India to Funan and from there went along the coast and arrived in Giao-Chau and Quāng Châu or Kuāng Chou (present-day Kuangtung province in South-East China)¹². Towards the close of the reign-period of Chinese Emperor Hui Ti (290-306 A.D.) of Western Tsin Dynasty (265-317 A.D.) he is said to have arrived at Lac Duong (in modern Honan province of East Central China). Later he returned to India, and since then nothing is known about him¹³.

The first Chinese Buddhist preacher to reach Giao-Chi, after the two Indian monks, was Mâu Băc (also known as Mâu Tu or Mou Po), a Toist by faith. Towards the end of the reign-period of the Chinese emperor Linh Dê or Ling Ti (168-189 A.D.) there broke out rebellion in China resulting in serious political chaos and crises which compelled Mâu Băc with his mother and many other Chinese scholars and Taoist monks to leave China in 189 A.D. and settle in Giao-Chi, then considered as a safe and peaceful country under king Si-Nhiệp. It was here that Mâu Băc studied Buddhist doctrines from the Indian monk, Kṣudra who, after his mother's death, professed Buddhism (194-195 A.D.) along

8. Cf. *The Histories of Buddha and the Patriarchs: From Phap Van to Co Chau*.

9. CL. MEDROLLE, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

10. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, in «Cahiers de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme d'Orient, Hanoi», No. 22, 1940, pp. 59-60. Also see BSEI, *Nouvelle Serio*, Tome XIII, No. 1, Saigon, 1938.

11. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *Phat Giao Viet Nam: Tu Khoi Nguyen Den Thi Ky XIII (Buddhism in Vietnam: From the Origins to the 13th Century A.D.)*, translated from French, *Le Bouddhisme en Annam: Des Origines au XIII^e Siecle*, by Tue Sy, Saigon, 1968, p. 56. Also see *Tu Tuong (The Thoughts)*, Saigon, No. 3, May 1973, p. 146.

12. HUI HAO, *Cao Tang Truven (Ch. Kao Seng Ch'uan) or Biographies of Eminent Monks* (compiled in 519 A.D.) also see S. DUTT, *Buddhism in East Asia*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 104.

13. NION CH'ANG, *Phat To Lich Dai Thong Tai (Ch. Fo Tsu Li Tai T'ung Tsai) or A History of Buddha and the Patriarchs Through the Ages* (compiled). This Chinese writer (Nion Chang) flourished during the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368 A.D.).

with many other Chinese. Thus, the two Indian monks — Mahājīvaka and Kṣudra together with the Chinese Buddhist Mou Po (or Mâu Băc) were the first promoters of Buddhism¹⁴ in Vietnam towards the close of the second century A.D.

Mou Po (Mâu Băc) was followed by two other monks namely Khang Tang Hoi (Chinese: K'ang Seng Hui) and Cuong Luong Lau Chi (Skt. Kalyāṇarūci: Chinese Chiang-Liang-Lou Chih) who propagated Buddhism in Giao-Chi (North Vietnam) during third century A.D. Khang Tang Hoi was born in India in c. 185-200 A.D. and came to Giao-Chi¹⁵ with his father who carried on business in that part of Vietnam. But, when he was only ten, his parents died and he entered monastery and devoted himself to the study and practice of Buddhism. In the course of time he not only mastered the Buddhist doctrines but also specialised in other secular subjects such as literature, administration, divination and astronomy, and subsequently came to be revered as a great Buddhist preacher. He is also credited with having translated several Sanskrit Buddhist works into Chinese, but only the *Satpārmita-Saṃgraha-Sūtra* translated by him is now available.

In 247 A.D. he went to China and propagated Buddhism among the people and converted them to this faith. He was thus the first India-born Vietnamese Buddhist monk who spread Buddhism in China. He died in 280 A.D.¹⁶

The other monk Cuong Luong Lau Chi or Kalyāṇarūci was of Indo-Scythian origin who had spent several years in Giao-Chau¹⁷. He is said to have worked there on the first translation into Chinese of the Sanskrit Buddhist text *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-Samādhi-Sūtra* in 255-56 A.D.¹⁸

As noted above, the first Buddhist centre in ancient Vietnam was established at Luy Lau, the then capital (modern Hā Băc province in North Vietnam) with its famous monastery of Phap Van. Buddhism during this period (2nd-3rd century A.D.) witnessed the predominance of the *Giao Ton* (Skt. Āgama, Ch. Chiao Tsung) or «the School of Doctrine», also known as *Thien Thai Tong* or «The Lotus School» whose founders were the above mentioned monks — Mou Po (Mau Bac) and Khang Tang Hoi¹⁹.

14. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *Les Chapitres Bibliographiques de la Qui Den et de Phau Huy Chu*, in BSEI, Nouvelle Series, Tome III, No. 1, Saigon, 1938, pp. 68-70.

15. According to Chou Hsiang Kuang he was born in Giao-Chi (*A History of Chinese Buddhism*, Allahabad, 1955, pp. 28-9).

16. Cf. TRUONG XUAN BINH, *The History of Vietnamese Culture* (MS), p. 94; E. CHAVANNES, *Seng Houei...*, in «T'oung Pao», Leiden, vol. IX (1909), pp. 199-212; CHOU HSIANG KUANG, *A History of Chinese Buddhism*, Allahabad, 1955, pp. 28-9; S. DUTT, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

17. P. PELLLOT, in «T'oung Pao», Leiden, vol. XXIII, 1923, pp. 100, 124; TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

18. P. PELLLOT, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 124; TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

19. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 59; TRUONG XUAN BINH, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

The Early Ly Dynasty (544-602 A.D.) witnessed great Buddhistic activities in North Vietnam with the arrival of the first Indian meditation master — Venerable Ti Ni Da Luu Chi (Skt. Vinītarūci: Ch. Wei Ni To Liu Chih)²⁰, the most illustrious name in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism. A Brāhmaṇa from South India (according to some, a native of Ujjain in North India)²¹, Vinītarūci is said to have travelled widely in Western India to study Buddhism. He then went to Truong An or Chang An (in North Central China) in 574 A.D. but as Buddhism was being persecuted by the Chinese Emperor Vo De or Wu-Ti (561-577 A.D.) of the Bac Chu (Pei Chou) or Northern Chou dynasty (557-581 A.D.) at that time²², he was forced to proceed southward to the territory of Yeh or Nghiep (in modern Honan province of East Central China) where he met venerable Tang Xan or Seng-Tsan, the third patriarch of Chau (meditation) School of Chinese Buddhism who accepted him as his disciple²³. After receiving *Dharma* from his patriarch he went to Southern China on the advice of his teacher to avoid persecution. He resided at the Che Chi monastery (in modern Kwang-tung province) where he translated many Sanskrit books relating to Buddhism into Chinese. In 580 A.D. (six years later) he went to north Vietnam (Giao-Chau) where he stayed in Phap Van monastery, noted earlier, and translated the original work *Mahāyāna Vaipulyadharani Sūtra* into Chinese, known as *Tai Fang Kuang Tsung Chip Ching*. After having transmitted his doctrine (*Dharma*) which he had received from his Chinese patriarch to his disciple Venerable Phap Hien, he died in 504 A.D.²⁴. Thus, Vinītarūci is traditionally regarded as the founder of the First Zen (Meditation) Sect of Vietnamese Buddhism²⁵ which was known as *Meditation School of Vinītarūci*. It was transmitted to nineteen generations including thirty-one Zen masters²⁶, the most eminent among them being Ven. Phap Thuan, Van Hanh, Huo Sinh and Vien Thong²⁷, all of whom flourished during 7th-12th centuries A.D.

Another great Zen Master belonging to the fourteenth generation of Vinītarūci-Meditation School was Khanh Hy (1066-1142 A.D.)²⁸ who

20. TRẦN VĂN GIÁP, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-3; CHOU HSIANG KUANG, *op. cit.*, p. 111; HOWARD J. SOSIS, *Introductory Notes...*, in « Zen Notes », Vol. XIV, Nos. 7-8, July-Aug. 1967, New York, p. 3.

21. CHOU HSIANG KUANG, *op. cit.*, p. 111; TRUONG XUAN BINH, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

22. According to Chou Hsiang Kuang, Vinītarūci came to India in 582 A.D. during the reign-period of the Sui (Tuy) dynasty (581-618 A.D.).

23. For details about this Chinese patriarch see D. T. SUZUKI, in « Essays on Zen Buddhism » (First Series), London, 2nd Impression, 1958, pp. 195-201.

24. For details about the Zen Master Phap Hien, see TRẦN VĂN GIÁP, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 102; TRUONG XUAN BINH, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

26. TRẦN VĂN GIÁP, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-13, 118.

27. *Ibid.*, also cf. S. DUTT, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

28. For details see TRẦN VĂN GIÁP, *Les Chapitres Bibliographiques de la Qui Den et de Phau Huy Chu*, in BSEI, Nouvelle Serie, Tome XIII, No. 1, Saigon, 1938, pp. 109 & 117 (Note 26).

is said to have been the son of a Brāhmaṇa (Sn.-Vn. *Ba La Mon*). He belonged to Co-Giao village (modern Co-Dieu village) in the Thanh Tri sub-prefecture in the Ho-Dong province of North Vietnam. A vegetarian since childhood he was highly respected and greatly admired for his deep knowledge of scriptures both by the king and the commoners. He is credited with having composed the *Collected Poems and Songs on the Awakening of the Truth* (Vn. *Ngo Dao Thi Ca Tap* - volume I) which is popularly known in Vietnam. Unfortunately, only one poem of this popular work is now available in Vietnam²⁹. Ha died at the age of 72 in 1142 A.D. The lineage of this Zen Master is quite interesting as it indirectly suggests how deep-rooted the institution of caste-structure had become in Vietnam which was introduced there by the Indian settlers whose historicity in South-East Asia goes as far back as second century A.D., if not earlier.

III

The history of the spread and growth of Buddhism in Vietnam, like many other countries of Asia, has two distinct phases. In the first it was the Indian Buddhist monks who, braving the hazards of long and strenuous journey by land and sea, reached Vietnam and succeeded tremendously in implanting this great religion in that country — a thrilling story of untold adventure, indomitable zeal and courage and unrivalled religious devotion and determination which we have attempted to narrate in brief in the preceding pages. The second phase unfolds the story of the same zeal and devotion on the part of the Vietnamese Buddhist monks who travelled through thick forests, hostile lands and violent seas to reach India to pay homage to the great founder of their religion.

As we have noted earlier, Giao-Chau or Annam (North Vietnam) served as a meeting place of the various Buddhist missions and pilgrims going to and coming from China and India³⁰. I-Tsing (Nghia Tinh: 634 A.D.-713 A.D.) informs us that during the reign-period of the Tang, six Vietnamese pilgrims of Annam travelled along with Indian and Chinese pilgrims through South Seas and reached Ceylon and India³¹.

29. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 60, No. 34.

30. For details see I-TSING, *Ta Tang Hsi Yu Chiu Fa Kao Seng Chuan* (« Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Tang Dynasty who went in search of Dharma in the Western Country »), in *Taisho Shinshū Daizokyo* (« The Canon of Buddhist writings published in the Taisho Era »), in 100 volumes published in Tokyo, 1924-34 (*Taisho*, Vol. 51, p. 30). Also see HOWARD J. SOSIS, *Introductory Notes on...*, in « Zen Notes », Vol. XIV, Nos. 6, 7-8, July-Aug. 1967, New York, pp. 11-2 (fn. 1, 6 & 20).

31. I-TSING, *Memoire Compose a l'epoque des Tang sur les religieux eminents qui allerent chercher la loi dans les payas d'occident* (translated from Chinese by Chavannes), Paris, 1894; P. V. BAPAT, *Chinese Travellers*, in « 2500 Years of Buddhism », 2nd Reprint, 1964, Delhi, pp. 241-43; CHOU HSIANG KUANG, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-17.

A native of Giao-Chau, Ven. Van Ky possessed good knowledge of Sanskrit and travelled widely along with Chinese Meditation Master Dam Khuen. He took higher ordination (*Upasampadā*) with Ven. Tri Hien (Sk. *Jñānabhadra*) at Java (Island of Southern Sumatra in Indonesia). In Giao-Chau he preached Buddhism to the monks as well as the laymen. Later he returned to secular life and resided in That Li Phat Tho or Śrīvijaya (modern Palembang seaport in south-eastern Sumatra of Indonesia). I-Tsing says that Ven. Van Ky was still alive when he visited India and, according to Ven. Thich Mat The, he died at the age of thirty³². Beyond this we have no other information about his activities in India.

Zen Master Ven. Dam Nhuan (Ch. Tan Jun), a native of La Yang (modern Honan province of East Central China), had deep knowledge of the Buddhist rules (*Vinaya*) and is said to have spent several months in Giao-Chi. Later he also embarked southwards with the sole intention of coming to India but on reaching Java he fell ill suddenly and died at the age of 30³³.

Ven. Giai Thoat Thien or Mokṣadeva was a native of Giao-Chau who had travelled extensively by boat in Southern Seas and visited several countries. He then went to India and visited Bodhgaya (Bihar State) and many other holy Buddhist places there. He died at a very early age of 25³⁴.

Ven. Khuy Hung, popularly known as Citradeva (Vn. Chat Dat La De Ba)³⁵, was an inhabitant of Giao-Chau and was the disciple of Chinese Meditation-Master Minh Vien (Ch. Ming Yuan)³⁶. This Chinese Zen Master whose Sanskrit name was Cintadeva (Sn. Ven. Chan Da De Ba) had studied and practised Buddhism since his childhood and had deep knowledge of all the Buddhist sacred canons. But, as Buddhism was then scorned and forbidden in China, he felt sad and went to Giao-Chau. From there he travelled to Java, Ceylon, and India where he visited the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya. And, while thus travelling he died but the actual date of his death is not known³⁷.

Ven. Khuy Hung is said to have been endowed with great intelligence and he possessed thorough knowledge of all the Buddhist texts. He travelled widely with his great teacher (Ven. Minh Vien) by boat in the Southern Seas, then landed at Ceylon and from there came to western and central India where he visited Bodhgaya and worshipped the Bodhi-tree (*Pipala* tree). Then he proceeded to Rājagṛha (Vuong Xa Thanh) (modern Rajgir in Patna district) where he suddenly fell ill and

32. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

33. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8; « Revue Indochinoise », Hanoi, No. 36, pp. 77-8.

34. « Revue Indochinoise », No. 27, p. 65. Also cf. TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

35. « Revue Indochinoise », No. 28, pp. 65-6; TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

36. *Ibid.*, No. 29, p. 66.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

died at the famous Venuvana (Vn.-Truc Lam) or « Bamboo-grove » at the age of 30 only³⁸.

Ven. Hue Diem, a native of Giao-Chau was the disciple of the Chinese Meditation-Master Vo-Hanh (Ch. Wu-Hsing). He is also said to have travelled to Ceylon and India with his teacher Vo-Hanh but we do not know any thing about the year of his death. I-Tsing also does not enlighten us on this point³⁹. We have, however, some information about Ven. Vo-Hanh whose Sanskrit name was Prajñādeva (Vn. Bat Nha De Ba). He came from the province of Kinh-Chau or Ching Chou (modern Ho Bac province of north-eastern China). After having extensively travelled in China, he is reported to have retired to a deep cave to devote himself to reciting the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* or « *The Lotus Scripture* ». Then he went to Giao-Chau and after having stayed there for a year went to the kingdom of Śrīvijaya (now Palembang in Indonesia). Later he went to India and met I-Tsing at the great university of Nālandā and from there both of them proceeded to the East. At that time he was about 50 years old and died at the age of 56⁴⁰.

The fifth Vietnamese monk who is said to have visited India was Ven. Tri Hanh, who also bore the Sanskrit name of Prajñādeva, like the Chinese Meditation-Master Vo-Hanh. He was an inhabitant of Chau Ai (modern Thanh Hoa province of north-central Vietnam). He reached Central India after crossing the sea and visited many holy Buddhist places. After that he is said to have come to stay at a monastery named Tin Gia in the north of the Gaṅgā where he passed away at the age of 50. Unfortunately however we are not in a position to identify the actual location of this monastery nor can we determine the Indian variant of its Vietnamese name in the present state of our knowledge.

The last Vietnamese monk to have visited India was the Meditation-Master Dai Thang Dang whose Sanskrit name was *Mahāyāna-Pradīpa* (Vn. *Ma Ha Gia Nā Bat Diapē Ba*)⁴¹. He was originally an inhabitant of Chau Ai, and became a Buddhist monk at Dvāravatī (Dvārakā in Gujrat, India)⁴². He came to the Chinese capital Truong An or Chang An (in present-day north-central China) in the company of Diem Tu, a Chinese envoy, where he received higher ordination (*Upasampatti*) from the great Master Hiuen Tsang or Yuang Chwang at the Tu An monastery. He had studied almost all the Buddhist texts during his stay at China⁴³.

After some time he returned to Giao-Chau, and then crossed the Southern Sea and reached Ceylon. From this place he proceeded to

38. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

40. *Ibid.*, No. 52, pp. 138-57; TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

41. « *Revue Indochinoise* », No. 32, pp. 68-73; TRẦN VĂN GIAP, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-4.

42. For the identification of Dvāravatī, see N. L. DEY, *The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India*, 3rd Edn. 1971, Delhi, p. 58.

43. For details, see CHOU HSIANG KUANG, *op. cit.*, p. 116; P. V. BAPAT, in « 2500 Years of Buddhism », pp. 231-41.

Southern and Eastern India and stayed at Tāmralipti (modern Tamluk in Midnapore district, West Bengal) for twelve years where he studied Sanskrit and mastered it fully. Moreover it was here that he translated several Sanskrit Buddhist works including the *Nidāna Sāstra* (Ch. *Yuan-Shang Lun*; Vn. *Duyen Sinh Luan*) or *The Treaties of Primary Cause* into Chinese. He met I-Tsing later and accompanied him to Central India. They first visited the Nālandā monastery at Nālandā (Patna district), the *Vajrāsana* (or the Mahābodhi monastery) at Bodhgaya (Gaya district), and proceeded to Pho Xa Li or Vaiśālī (now a district in Bihar), the most ancient seat of republic in India, graced on many occasions by Lord Buddha. He then went to Cau Thi Na Quec or Kuśinagara (modern Kāsi in Gorakhpur district of Uttara Pradesh) and visited almost all the holy Buddhist places in India along with the Chinese Meditation-Master Vo Nanh or Wu-Hsing. It was at the monastery of Parinirvāṇa (Vn. Bat Niet Ban) in Kuśinagara that he passed away at the age of 60⁴⁴.

From the above survey it would appear that during this period there were many eminent Buddhist Vietnamese monks who are known to us through the poems which were addressed to them by the brilliant poets of the Tang⁴⁵. These monks mostly travelled to India to visit the Buddhist holy places and greatly contributed not only to the development of Buddhism in Annam (i.e. North Vietnam) but also to the propagation of the doctrine abroad. Some of them were so reputed as to be invited by the Chinese Emperors to come to China to expound Buddhist scriptures in the T'ang Imperial palace.

IV

The impact of Buddhism in Vietnam was so great that it influenced almost all the walks of Vietnamese life. Even the Vietnamese music was not immune from this all pervading influence. We have an interesting account in Vietnamese annals as to how an Indian Buddhist monk along with a hundred Cham royal dancers and musicians was brought to Vietnam as war-prisoners by emperor Le Dei Hanh after the defeat of Champā. Cham music during this period was very much influenced by Indian music, and for this the Indian Buddhist monks who had come to Champā to spread their religion were solely responsible⁴⁶. This was the period (10th cent. A.D.) when the Vietnamese music and dance are said to have taken a concrete shape.

44. Also cf. G. COEDÉS, *The Indianised States of South-East Asia* (Trans. Susan Brown Courcing), Honolulu, 1968, p. 29.

45. TRUONG XUAN BINH, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

46. ALBERT LAVIGNAC, *Encyclopedia de la musique*, p. 3112; CLAUDE MARCEL DUBOIS, *Le Instruments de Musique de l'Inde Ancienne* (The Musical Instruments of Ancient India), Paris, 1941, pp. 89, 205.

It is interesting to note that of the eight musical instruments used by the Vietnamese musicians in the official and religious ceremonies, atleast six are of Indian origin: for instance, the *Ovoid*, Lute or Ty Ba (Sino-Vn) or *P'ip'a* (Chinese) or *Biwa* (Japanese) — a four-string pear-shaped lute (*Vĩnā*) used in the Bombay region in the 7th century A.D.⁴⁷; the Ho Cam, the three-stringed lute⁴⁸; the Ong Sao, the traverse flute⁴⁹; the Ong Tieu or Siao, the straight flute⁵⁰; the Prāch (Vn) or the P'o (Chinese), the wooden costanets, resembling the one which we come across between the hands of an Indian musician on a painting in a cave at Bagh⁵¹ in Madhya Pradesh; and the *Sand-Class Shaped Drum* resembling the Indian *ḍamarū*.

Most of these instruments were carried first to China or Java and then to Vietnam by the visiting Indian monks and laymen and they are popular even now in those countries. Of the many factors leading to the intercourse between these two countries the most effective was music which easily won the hearts of the people and established close rapport between the two distant cultures.

Moreover, the two countries which contributed most to the propagation and spread of Buddhism in Vietnam were China and India. A close study of Buddhism in Vietnam would unmistakably point to its two distinct forms — (i) The Religion of the North and (ii) the Religion of the South⁵². The Chinese provenance can be explained by the fact that the two countries had close political and cultural contacts for a thousand years through migrations of Chinese Buddhists into North Vietnam in early christian centuries and also the easy access from China to the Red River Valley which constituted the original Vietnamese Colony⁵³. But, India being far off, there were few contacts between the two countries. It has been rightly pointed out that « Early Vietnamese contacts with India were in part commercial and in part religious because of Buddhist pilgrims' journeys in both directions. Sea-borne missions from India stopped in Vietnam enroute to China proper, and Vietnamese pilgrims subsequently obtained copies of the sacred Buddhist texts from cultural centres in South Sumatra. But, for various reasons Chinese culture took precedence over Indian in Vietnam »⁵⁴.

Under the Ly kings, Hanoi, besides becoming the capital of Vietnam, rose to be an important Buddhist centre, and near it was a seaport for voyages from India and back which was used by the Buddhist

47. TRUONG XUAN BINH, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

53. S. DUTT, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

54. JOHN F. CADY, *South-East Asia: Its Historical Development*, New York, 1964, p. 17.

monks from India on the sea-way to China during T'ang-Sung dynasties of China. At some places in Vietnam there were probably small Indian settlements of mercantile origin⁵⁵. It is true, in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism no Indian names stand out except Mahājīva, Kalyāṇaśrī (Kalyāṇarūci) and Vinītarūci⁵⁶, but it is also equally true that Indian influence is traceable in the art, culture and religion of its people. And, « thanks to Chinese monks, and especially to Indian monks, Buddhism has gradually spread over the country—yet, with no organisation ». Though eighty percent of the people in Vietnam are Buddhist, the *Samgha* (monk fraternity) is not as organised as in other parts of South-East Asia.

Magadh University, Bodhgaya

ABBREVIATIONS

- BEFEO Bulletin de L'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient.
BSEI Bulletin de La Société des Etudes Indochinoises.

55. S. DUTT, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 110.